

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4222

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT PE

SUBJ: PERUVIAN PRIME MINISTER EDGARDO MERCADO JARRIN PRESS CONFERENCE

1. PERUVIAN PRIME MINISTER EDGARDO MERCADO JARRIN HELD PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 7, 1974 WHILE HE WAS IN BOGOTA ATTENDING INAUGURATION OF COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT ALFONSO LOPEZ MICHELSEN.

2. ACCORDING TO BOGOTA MORNING DAILY EL TIEMPO, MERCADO STRONGLY ATTACKED THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS SOCIETY (SIP). "WE DO NOT WANT A CONCENTRATION OF POWER. A SMALL GROUP HAD DOMINATED THE PRESS. THE SIP IS A SIMPLE COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT DEFENDS THE OWNERS OF THE PRESS RATHER THAN THE WORKERS". HE SAID THAT THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE HAD REACTED FAVORABLY TO THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS, AND THAT THE NEW DIRECTORS OF THE PRESS ARE NOT TOOLS OF THE GOVERNMENT

BUT RATHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE. "THE REACTION OF THE PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS HAS BEEN FAVORABLE BECAUSE BEFORE THERE HAD BEEN LIBERTY FOR THE (NEWSPAPER OWNERS) BUT NOT FOR NEWS REPORTING", HE SAID. "WE HAVE COMPLETED A SIMPLE TRANSFER OF EXPRESSION. WE WANT AN AUTHENTIC FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. A NEW JOURNALISM HAS DEVELOPED IN PERU".

3. CONCERNING CHILE, MERCADO SAID, "WE MAINTAIN CORDIAL RELATIONS
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WITH CHILE. IT IS FALSE (TO ASSUME) THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A

CONFLICT (WITH CHILE) EXISTS. THERE IS NO ANTAGONISM WITH THAT COUNTRY". HE IMPLIED THAT THE RUMORS OF A POSSIBLE WAR WERE PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION.

4. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE INCREASED ARMAMENT PURCHASES OF PERU, MERCADO ASSERTED THAT -WE BUY FEWER TANKS THAN VENEZUELA OR OTHER COUNTRIES. WHAT ALARMS (SOME) IS THAT WE BOUGHT THEM IN RUSSIA. WE DID THIS BECAUSE THE FRENCH TANKS COST THREE OR FOUR TIMES MORE AND THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT SELL US EVEN A SHOCK ABSORBER". "WE ARE ONLY REPLACING A FEW OF OUR OLD ARMS", HE CLAIMED.

5. MERCADO REFUSED TO SPECULATE AS TO THE TIMING OF ELECTIONS, ADDING THAT THERE WAS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE, INCLUDING THE ADOPTION OF A CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL DEFINE THE FUTURE PATH OF THE PERUVIAN SOCIETY.
VAKY

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